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Interview with Michel Sidorow
by Lyle Silversmith on
5/4/91/SAT at Jones Beach,
NY-Captree Basin

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L- There are two chapters of your life that I really want to talk about-two unknowns to me. I know that you were a prisoner of war (during WWII) and that you escaped 3 times- I think?

M— Yes.

L- And also, in one of the Boruch Wolinsky Family Circle journals is a photograph of, I think, your parents. Did you ever see that photograph? There is a photograph of your family, and it says they died on a very specific date- I think October 15, 1942, and I always wondered how did anybody know exactly when, and how, they died.

M- The way I found out about it- I didn't know the exact date. (NB Page 2)

L- They have the exact date- I can show it to you.

M- Grossman. He was sent to Siberia.

L- Because he was in the Russian zone (of occupied Poland), as was your family.

M- That's right. But my family was able to stay on because they were always involved in civic affairs in town and helping people.

L- And so they chose to stay on? And the Russians let them stay there?

M- So they could see what they could do there and how they could help people along.

L- How did they convince the Russians to let them stay?

M- They needed somebody to take care of the community. It was a little town.



L- We are talking about Drogichin (Drohitchin)?

M— Yes. It as a little town. They had to have some representatives. The people involved in business who were not involved in city affairs- they just picked them up- like the Grossmans. They had a lot of property; they had stores and so-on, and they were considered capitalists, and the Capitalists were sent to Siberia.

L- And those were the ones who survived?

M- Yes. Most of them. Some of them were sent to farms on the outskirts of Drogichin. Some of them decided to get into the woods and hide there, and become guerrillas, and those who were in town could not very well do it. Of course, the population wasn't very receptive. They didn't want to have any Jews amongst them. They used to point them out, and so on.

L- They used to kill them?

M- Yes, and if they didn't kill them themselves they used to find the Germans who would kill them, and the Ukrainians, of course, were the most anti-semitic.

L- But Drohitchin wasn't in what was considered the Ukraine.

M- No. But there were Ukrainians living in town, and they were the peasants. There were some of them, the more enlightened ones, who were not as anti-semitic as-

L- But the more enlightened ones were probably taken away by the Russians too.

M- Right. The ones who remained were the people who came to Church and the Priests said "The Jews killed Christ and so you have to kill the Jews", and the Jews are enemies-like today with Israel, it's the same business-survival.

L- So what happened? Your family stayed on.

M- My family stayed on in town.

L- The war started on September 1, 1939 but the Germans didn't come across (The Russian zone of Poland) until June 22, 1941, and almost immediately- Drohitchin was in the Russian zone right across the border from the German zone. So the Germans must have been there 1 or 2 days later (Ed. Note- The Germans arrived on June 26).

M They were there while the Germans were just passing through. Because the Germans used to come into a town- they had their organization all ready to find out where all the Jews were. From there, of course, they put some of them in a ghetto and some of them were sent away, and some stayed on. I really don't know the rest. The story how they went about it, I was a prisoner of war and that was after my first escape . (NB p 6)

L- OK. Let's get back to you. You went to France. When did you go to France?

M- I went to France in 1937.

L- For what purpose?

M- I went to the University of Grenoble Polytechnical Institute to study there. I couldn't get into an engineering school in Poland. For a Jew, it was-

L- They had already enacted anti-Jewish laws?

M— Oh, sure!

L- So because of these laws, you couldn't get into another school, so you went to another country.

M- On top of it, they were already were aware of all of the anti-Semitism going on, and the family wanted us boys to get out. So Zvi went to Israel.

L- When did Zvi go to Israel?

M- In 1937, and I went to France to Grenoble because I was accepted to the university.

L- And you had two sisters.

M- Yes. One was married to a pharmacist, and his family had a drugstore and he worked there with them, and the other one was still single when I left.

L- She got married later?

M Yes. When she a nurse, she got married to a doctor and she was working in the hospital there. When the Germans came, I understand that because they were Jewish they couldn't even work in the hospital.

L- That was immediate?

M- That was right away. So they then ran away. My father had some people who used to work for him. My grandfather still knew them from my grandfather's time, and so they hid them.

L- These were Polish people who hid them?

M- No. They were not Polish. They were Belorussians. They were the peasant population there. The population in the town, they were not Polish.

L- That area is called Belorussia. (Ed. Note- with the breakup of the Soviet Union, that area, seized in 1939 by Russia and after the war re-seized again, became the independent Republic of Belarus.)

M They were Russians. So, they went and they hid there, and somebody, some other Belorussians, told the Germans that they were hiding in these farms.

L- So who was hiding there?

M My father, my mother, my sister, my two sisters- the whole family. They had

small children.

L- Both your sisters had children?

M- The older one had a boy and a girl. The younger one, I believe, had a boy.

L- Now, do you remember the last names of your brother-in-laws?

(Ed. Note- the Dr. was named David Lev).

M Yes. I believe. Let me think about it. I have this information at home. He was my brother's friend, and they went to school together.

L- So they were exposed by another peasant. They probably got a bag of sugar for each Jew that they turned in. I think it was the going price.

M- So they took them out and they took out the people who hid them too, and right in front of the house, they machine gunned them.

L- So the family that hid your family was taking a great risk. Everybody who hid Jews were risking their lives. So how do you know this?

M- From Grossman.

L- How did Grossman know this?

M- He came back. When he came back from Siberia he went to Drohitchin and he talked to people and he found out what happened. I found out in 1942 because I wrote to them. When the Russian administration was there, we were able to write to each other. (But later) I got the postcard returned to me, and the mailman wrote on the postcard "Your family is not here anymore". Nobody's there.

L- So they were code words that meant everybody died?

M- That's right. So, after that, (I knew they died but) I didn't know exactly how. One short fact: I asked, "What is life about? You

Have to be a prisoner? Take a risk!"

L- Before you tell me how you escaped, I know the history of the French collapse to Germany, but when did you join the French army?

M- In 1939.

L- When France declared war against Germany?

M- Yes.

L- Were you drafted, or did you volunteer?

M- Of course! That was the style . We all volunteered! Except that someone had connections to get out of the country- they didn't. Otherwise, we knew we were going to conquer the Germans, just like that, and this was the thing to do.

L- And where were you stationed in France?

M- I was all over. One station in Mastronaire (?), and from there we were shipped out from the front.

L- So you were not at the front when the Germans invaded?

M- That's right.

L- So when did your unit surrender?

M- Probably a day or two after the Germans encircled us.

L- The Germans went right past you?

M- That's correct.

L- Were you on the Maginot Line?

M

Yes. Right behind the Maginot Line, on the Belgian side, where there was no Maginot line. The Germans went right past on the left and right, and then they came from behind and encircled us. And, of course, the orders were "Surrender!"

L- So the whole army surrendered?

M —The whole army surrendered and they started marching us to camps. We were marching like cattle. There was no resistance at all. (NBPage 13)
While we were at the front, we were demoralized a lot, too, because we saw trains with ammunition and food, and what have you, while France was at war with Germany, supposedly, preparing to go across the frontier.

L- This was the "Phony War"?

M- That's right. Like very similar to what happened right now in Iraq. They left Iraq an opening to get oil and stay on in power. He's now entrenched more in power than he was before.

L- If France had attacked Germany when France attacked Poland, they could have beaten Germany, but they didn't.

M They didn't, because for some reason, because we didn't do anything, when we went into Lebanon, supposedly to protect them, once they come in with the truck with the munitions and they killed so many Americans they decided to get out of there.

L- So you were force marched to where?

M- To a camp, where they separated us out. They put these people here, and those people here, and the Jewish people in one place. We ended up in Alsace Lorraine. I don't remember the little town. They put us in a military camp.

L- It was a French military camp?

M- Which they turned into a POW camp.

L- Was there any large city near? It was in northern France. When the Germans separated you, they knew you were Jewish?

M- Yes. They at that time knew I was Jewish because we didn't know what was going on in Germany.

L- And the other Jewish prisoners they took out separately? And what did they do with you then?

M- They gave us clothes with a Jewish star, and they starved us. As we were marching, - they used to let us out in camp to walk around. They used to throw a slice of bread or a sandwich or whatever and they used to watch and take pictures of how everybody went for the food.

L- It was like throwing a piece of bread to the pigeons and watching all the pigeons go for it.

M- Pigeons don't fight as much. We were actually rubbing, scratching, fighting, for----

L- And the Germans would take photographs.

M- They took pictures, and had a good time with it.

L- Were the Jews in a separate camp?

M- We were in the same camp but a separate barrack.

L- And how many Jews were there?

M- We were 47, and we had to go exercise and we used to go out and march. I used to be the commanding officer - with the highest rank there.

L- How did you get the highest rank so quickly?

M I was a 2nd Lieutenant. It was easy, especially university people.

L- So you were in charge of this group?

M- Yes. So we decided since we were Jews, we had to be more of a soldier than the others. When we got dressed, we should be spic and span, as much as we could be, and march like soldiers and not to march like prisoners dragging, and so on. But it didn't help anyway. We didn't get anything better until the Red Cross came around. The Red Cross came and said "These are soldiers. They are not civilians. You have to treat them as soldiers. And they made them take the clothes, and give us new clothes, and we were mixed with other prisoners. But we were able to already join the rest of the group as far as training exercises.

L- And you got more food?

M- Nobody got more food. They just didn't have it. They couldn't supply us with it. But they allowed packages to come in. So through the Red Cross we would get packages. Zvi sent me a lot of cigarettes. He found a source from Canada, and with the scarcity, we were able to trade it for food.

NBPage 17

L- Cigarettes were like currency?

M- That's right. So that was a great help. Then, from the camp, I was with a friend of mine. We decided, since we were not far from Strassbourg, we would try to get there. And from there we would try to make it to Paris, and then—

L- How far were you from Strassbourg?

M 30 miles, and we managed to get there.

L- Is Strassbourg near the border with Germany?

M- Strassbourg is in Alsace-Lorraine, yes. At the time it was considered as part

of France. So from Strassbourg we managed to get on a train to go to Paris.

L- But how did you escape out of the camp?

M- Just walked out in front of the guard. Just so.

L- You and who else?

M- Gaston, a friend of mine. Just two of us.

L- You just walked out?

M- That's right. Because the camp was- we had barbed wire- there was a gate and there was a soldier. We were standing around to go for our food- the soup- and usually at that time the guard was not as alert, because he figured for the food no one is going to go away, or whatever.

L- They figured no one was going to run away because they needed the food?

M— So we walked out and kept on walking. We decided if they stop us, we'll stop. But if-

L- This was in the daytime?

M- Yes! Just around 5 PM, and we just continued on.

L- Gaston was Jewish also?

M No.

L— So he had family in France?

M-----Yes, He had a big family. He had a farm. And so we figured if we made it, we will be able to get to his family.

L- He knew you were Jewish.

M- Yes. In fact, he was- the French were, the soldiers especially, did not discriminate. The country was very sympathetic. It was other nationalities, especially the Poles.

L- That we know. But there is always a lot of discussion about how the French cooperated with the Germans.

M- That was in city government. Not the individuals. The individual Frenchman hated the Germans. "The enemy of enemy is my friend".
But there was Le Champ_____. I believe you saw....

L- Yes. I saw it on Channel 13 (Public Television). The French Huguenots.

M- So we managed to get to Paris, under the train. We lived under the train. It was cold.

L- What time of year was this? Because I remember the Germans attacked in June?

M This was about 4 months after.

L- So this must have been the end of October. So it was cold already.

M- Especially we were under the train.

L- And you were getting blasted by the wind?

M- That's right. But anyway, we made it to Paris. And at the trainstation we were picked up by 2 French detectives in plain clothes.

L- In Paris?

M The police asked "Who are you?". The first thing they sk for is I.D., and they then transferred us to the German Wehrmacht.

L- So the French detectives transferred you back to the German

Army , instead of protecting you. They turned you in.

M- Yes. That's what I told you. There were some who were working for the government. From there they went us back to a camp in Stettin (a larger camp). This camp was in Germany-Stalag 11. This was near Stettin. That's where they were making the V rockets. (NB page 21)

L So you and Gaston were back in this camp?

M That's right. There they took us out to work, to help the farmers.

L- In this camp, did they know that you were Jewish?

M No. When I came back, the 1st letter was an N, not a W (Ed. Note- changing the name from Sidorow to Sideron). And there, I already knew what was going on and I didn't call myself Jewish. They really didn't ask us anymore.

L- So there they used you as French slaves?

M And they sent us out to work ----

L- With German farmers? So you became a farmhand. Slave labor, in effect.

M That's what it was. I didn't tell them I was an officer because they didn't let officers out.

L- So you didn't even say you were an officer?

M- That's right. They didn't know what I was. So we were able to go out to mix with the resistance and there I started fixing clocks, and I made little tools myself and did watches and I used to do it for the German soldiers and whoever brought anything in and we used to trade it for food. With that, I was allowed to go into town to get parts, but not by myself of course. One of the soldiers used to take me into town to buy parts and sometimes in town they used to let us go on our own and there I made contact with the French underground.

L- In Germany?

M In Alten-Galov. The French underground- they were people. They were the civilians that they took from France to work in Germany. And there they made two passports for me and my friend. There was a medical student there who had also volunteered and of course was made a POW. Actually, I didn't get the two passports. In Alton-Galov I worked in the saw mill, where we made wood and pre-fabricated barracks, and we had a lot of planers to make tongues and grooves. We used to cut straight from the trunk of the tree, cut it in boards and the boards went into planers and at the end came out tongues and grooves, and I used to take care of the maintenance of one of the planers. The day we were supposed to go to town and pick up our passports and disappear, that thing broke down and I couldn't go to town. I lost my contact. My friend went in. He went down.

L- The passports were to which country?

M Sweden. The passport with the visa with the whole thing. And he made it to Sweden. He finished medical school there and met a Swedish girl, got married and stayed on, and I remained at the camp for a little while longer, and then we decided we were going to make a good escape. At that time, there were about six of us. We were able to get dye to tint our clothes from the people who worked with us in the sawmills. Germans used to throw away newspapers. We knew these were late papers that we could pick up.

L- These were German people who helped you?

M These were German workers from the sawmill who were against the regime that they had at the time. Many a time they would put a whole sandwich in the papers and throw it away. So, we were more or less able to communicate with them during workdays and so on. Of course it was very dangerous for them more than it was for us. But somehow there were some human beings among them too.

So we set out, the way we were- nobody questioned our clothes. And also, as we went to work, one by one we disappeared from our work stations where we used to be—

L- All on one day?

M Yes. We had a point where we were supposed to meet and they noticed that some were missing and they came back. They started looking for the others and they found the others were missing too. So immediately there was an alert and so on and they got us in town.

L- So that was your second escape.

M Yes. They took us back to the camp, and it's interesting about one of the officers who interviewed us - we played on their being good soldiers. We said, "Don't you expect from your soldiers to escape and try to get back to their own country?" and so on. "This is what it is all about. You are to guard us and we are to escape. That's why you have the camps." Officially, he had to do something to us. We understood that.

L- This was not the Gestapo?

M The regular army. The Gestapo would—

L- —would have killed you right away.

M But as long as we weren't civilians we were probably safe. So, from there they sent us—

L- In other words, the gestapo took care of civilians but the Wehrmact took care of—

M —the soldiers. From there they sent us - six of us- and others from other camps- we had a whole car. We were shipped out all the way to Poland near Lvov.

L- So you were sent back to Poland.

M- Yes.

L- This was Eastern Poland. So this must have been after the Germans invaded—

M -the Russian front.

L- There were a lot of Ukrainians living there.

M- That's right.

L- When did this happen?

M- Oh, G-d. This was in 1944.

L- In other words, you survived in the German camp for more than two years?

M -About two years.

L- So what part of 1944 was this? It must have been early.

M- No. It was either the spring or the fall. I am thinking about the weather.

L- Because by the fall of 1944 the Russians were not that far away from Lvov.

M- It was the spring of 1944. It wasn't that hot yet.
There you could have just stayed in camp and laid around and do nothing.

L- What kind of camp was this? Also slave labor?

M Yes. Also. They used us for any kind of chores to do with the army.

L- But it was still the Wehrmacht?

M -Yes. There I had an awful experience. They were looking for people who had trades, or, what have you- electricians, mechanics- and they used to work for the Army. In that area they used horses, still, so they needed a blacksmith. I see everybody is gone. I didn't want to stay in camp. I said I was a blacksmith. I knew nothing about blacksmithing. But I figure what can I lose? If they find out I am not- and they took me to the blacksmiths in town. And the blacksmiths happened to be Jewish. They kept them to---

instead of sending them to a concentration camp- because they needed this trade. So they kept them to work. As soon as the soldier let me in there, they started talking German to me, which i didn't understand, . So we communicated through signs. As soon as the soldier walked out, I said in Yiddish, "I speak a little Yiddish". They almost fainted. I talked in Yiddish. I told them I don't know a damn thing about blacksmithing, and I volunteered just to get out of the camp. They gave me a hammer and they showed me.

L- Did these people know about the camps?

M -They knew everything that was going on.

L- Did they know more than you knew?

M- Oh. Yes.

L And they told about everything that was happening?

M - At that time, we already knew, because they sent us out by train. We used to see the bodies of kids-little children along the railroad tracks. We didn't know what the heck this meant.

L- Bodies of children?

M - Bodies of children!! We were in freight cars. All we could do was peek out.

L- Why did they shoot children by the railroad tracks?

M -When they shipped the people to concentration camps-and there were some nearby too, they were sending them out to Treblinka, to Poland, and so on.

L- Yes. A lot of the camps were near there.

M -So the children used to die. They used to throw them out the window.

L- The parents would throw them out the window in order to-----

M -Because they couldn't stand the stench and so on.

L- ----to save the children?

M- Some that lived and some that dies. They couldn't keep them. So when I made contact with these people they us what was going on, that there were trains which were shipping people to concentration camps. They didn't exactly know that the people were being killed. At that time we didn't know that. But we knew that a lot of Jewish people were sent to the camps.

There, I saw a fellow who, while I was going to try on a horseshoe, then i would be able to shoe the horses. Putting on a horseshoe on a horse was a Jewish man, a skeleton; he was cleaning a horse; he was skin and bones. So he was standing in the garage cleaning the horse and someone I called "Amalek"-- he was a 6 foot soldier with cleats on his boots-

L- This was a German soldier?

M He passed by and hollered "Juden: faster! faster!" Then he kicked him right on the spine with his boot, and he fell right under the horse, and you feel: my brother! I still talk about it. It still burns me. I am there; I had a hammer, and I couldn't do anything. What could I have done? He could have killed me and him at the same time. Just here I speculated that he would get up. That's the injustice done to this person. I have the picture in which I see the man-- n i c e. Sometimes I think back and many a time I want to forget, but that picture doesn't disappear. (NBPage 31)

L- Did he die on the spot?

M- No. He didn't die. He lay there. I couldn't much help him, either. But I picked him up and he was explaining that his whole body hurts and so I told other people.....(?)

There we were planning another escape which did not materialize.

L- Did you have any idea where you wanted to escape to?

M- At that time we wanted to escape and go to the mountains of Spain.

L- But that was so far away!

M- It was too far away.. That was too far. Or Italy. We didn't know whether we would be able to get through Italy because the Italians were collaborating.

L- What about Switzerland?

M- Switzerland we couldn't even think about because it was too far.

L- What about Russia?

M- That's where we eventually got to- Russia. So I brought in tools and we dug a tunnel across the street from the camp.

L- Just like in the movie "The Great Escape."

M- And our stuff was under the beds. That was really planned.

L- Did you ever see the movie "The Great Escape?"

M- No. Somebody must have known about our tunnel. We used to dig this stuff up. We finally made it across the street, and it was a big number of people that went out.

L- You went out at night.

M- They let us out at night.

L- Who let you out?

M- The Germans.

L- What do you mean?

M- They let us go until there were enough to be able to use their machine guns. There were about 40 killed.

L- In other words, they knew you were escaping?

M- They must have known we were escaping. They must have known. So once they started shooting some of us didn't go anymore.

L- So you made it out to the exit of the tunnel?

M- Those who got killed made it to the exit of the tunnel. They were able to get into the field and 40 were machine gunned. Then they came in from the other side to see where the tunnel started. Of course, it was some experience after this- how did we do it, and who was your leader, and so on.

L- So nobody escaped?

M- Those that escaped were shot. Of course, we discussed all the things just in case this happened. So if anybody gets killed, of course the leader that died, they were the ones. We had nothing to lose. Eventually, in the end of 1944, we heard already the Russian artillery, and we started planning a new escape.

L- So this was a 4th escape?

M- Yes. The 3rd was not really an escape because I did not get out. We were planning the escape. They got us.

L- The people who were escaping now were Jews?

M- No. Not only Jews. French- we were already mixed at the time.

L- Jews and French and slave laborers from other countries?

M — That's right. We were already all mixed at that time. The slave laborers

were not in our camps. The slave laborers were in town. The camps were only for the soldiers and POWs.

L- Now where were you staying?

M- With the POWs.

L- So the ones who went through the tunnel were POWs?

M- Yes. There our barracks were prefabricated barracks. Since I was working in ALTN GRAVOFF I knew how the barracks were put together. So since we heard the artillery coming so close to us, we decided that maybe if we got out, we might be able to make it to the Russian side and one night we decided that to take the barracks apart. There were sections of the barrack. There were 30 of us in this particular barrack, and we unscrewed it. And during the day, while we were supposedly cleaning, we took the bolts out. Comes the night, with the artillery going, we figured that they wouldn't hear our noise. One by one all the 30 of us just walked out.

L And you went East?

M And we went towards the sound of the artillery. Of course, -"HALT!" Guns top us-the Russians. Being that I spoke Russian, I told them who we were and so on.

L- How long did you have to go before you----

M- We went about 8 miles. They were actually right next to us. We went into the woods and we just kept on walking. There was nobody! You didn't see a German soldier! I think the guards from the camp disappeared too. I wasn't going to look for them to make sure. But there was nobody there, and we kept on marching and we met up with the Russians. The Russians didn't trust us. They thought we were spies.

L- I think the Russians felt that way about everybody.

- M- After a while, we told them where we came from and so on and they saw our tags and they began to trust us a little. Since there was no place to put us- they were on the front line- so we went along with them. And they happened to be a mechanical division. They had the big 72 ton tank. They were able to go through anything. And these Russians, either they were high, or they were on drugs.
- L Vodka?
- M And so they tried to show off how good a tank they had. I said, "It can't be. You couldn't go through that building!" And they said "Can't? Look! And they went straight through an apartment house as if nothing were in its way. After a while we went with them, and they had a train going back, and they sent us back to Russia. There in Russia, somehow-
- L- At what point did they send you back on the train?
- M Right from the little road. We went onto a road. From that time, they were already a little organized.
- L- And by that time I think they had already liberated Maidanek, one of the concentration camps.
- M We met with another train which was going to Germany, and they were soldiers from Odessa. And we took that train, and we took that train, and there they told us what was happening. We knew already From there I ended up in Odessa. I was in Odessa for 4 months, until they were able to send us back to France.
- L- So you were in Odessa till the end of the war?
- M Yes.
- L- And after France? Zvi was in Israel.
- M- Zvi was already in the United States. Zvi went to Israel in 1933. He came to the United States in 1937.

L So you contacted Zvi, I assume.

M Once I went to France, I contacted Zvi. I told him where I was. There I had a friend.....

L- How long had it been since Zvi had heard from you?

M- Zvi didn't hear from me until Germany(?)

L So when he heard from you, that was the first he knew that you were alive?

M That's right. I don't think they knew then about the family yet. He didn't know the family was gone and of course, he wanted me to come here. I wasn't in a hurry to get to the United States.

L- Where did you want to go?

M I wanted to stay in France. First of all, I got benefits from being in the French Army- finishing out school, and then going on for what I wanted. We had quite a bit of benefits. Apartments we were able to get, where there was a scarcity before. We were veterans. I made good contacts with people and so on. I met a girl that I was going out with steady and Zvi of course wanted me to come here because I was the only family he had. I couldn't get a visa to the United States anyway, and I was seriously thinking of staying on. The family survived in France(?) We were hidden by French people, and very nice people too. Zvi managed to get through cousin Jack Smith a ticket to come by plane here. With that, I was able to get to the American consulate and get a visa to come to the United States. Because they didn't have any transportation then, they didn't give out any visas. Since they weren't giving out any visas, on the Polish quota I was able to get a visa to come to the United States, and this is how we ended up here.

L- So where did you meet Mildred?

M- I had some friends here from France, who came here before the war. And he was the one who was supposed to enlist with me in the army but he was the

one who got the visa and he came to the United States. So he came here in 1939. When I came I made contact with him. I also know another family that I met in France- the Hammers of the Hammer galleries and Occidental Petroleum. We were good friends. So when I came to the United States, I went to visit them. I had a friend here who went to college in France, and she was in contact with them too, and so we went to visit the Hammers in the United States. And Elsa called me up and said, "Michel, I want you to meet a girl. She's a good friend of a friend of mine, and I would like you to meet her. It was the day before we were to pay a Shiva call to this Hammer. By then I already had a car. And (I said), "I'm going Sunday to pay a Shiva call. Would you like to come? So she came with me. (NBPage 41)

L- So that was your first date- a shiva call.

M- Yes.

L Several years ago I interviewed Aunt Pauline. She received a letter in yiddish from your parents. And it was written, I believe, in 1936, and they couldn't read it too clearly. I believe Aunt Pauline still has it. (Ed. Note-Pauline Streicher died a few years after this interview.) She read it to me, as much as possible, while I was interviewing her. By that time the Polish anti-Jewish laws had already taken effect and the situation there was already bad.

M I remember when I left; I had never seen my father cry. But at that train, he knew we would not see each other again.

L- I have the exact date when your family died. I have a photograph of them from the Boruch Wolinsky Family Circle Dinner Journal of 1947.

M- Our family is related to Chaim Weizman.

L- Weizman came from Motol, which is right next to Drogichin. (Ed. Note- the relationship would probably be through Smith (Shmid) who came from Motol.

M One of our ancestors named Sidrer (Ed. Note-Sidur), he was a bookbinder, and he lived in Motol. And somehow there is some blood relationship with the

Weizman family from Motol.

L- Now I can tell people I am related to Chaim Weizman.

M I know there is some relationship there. The bookbinder. Sidrer was a bookbinder of a prayer book.

L In Weizman's biography, I photocopied the first four pages because it tells what the entire area was like. (Ed. Note- more detailed descriptions exist in the Drohitchin Yiskor Book.)

M The family lived in Nagorye, and then moved to Drohitchin.

L This is your father in this photo. He looks like my grandfather.

M All the brothers looked alike. And he acted like him too. Your grandfather was an angel.

L I have a letter from Mrs. A. Eisenstein of Israel.....THE END

